

THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

A QUARTERLY DEVOTED TO SYNTHETIC
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THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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OBJECTS:—

- (1) To assist all who are endeavouring to follow, by any means or any system of religion, philosophy, or mysticism, the Mystical Path leading to union with the Divine, as the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.
- (2) To enshrine the most essential and vital aspects of Truth which have been presented by the great religious, philosophical, and mystical systems of the world, and by the known great Teachers of mankind, and which are most capable of elevating, enriching, and expanding the human consciousness.
- (3) To contribute towards the synthesis and harmonious integration of all presentations of the wisdom of the ages by relating all particular expressions to the universal first principles from which all are derived.
- (4) To preserve at the same time the peculiar beauty and appeal which each particular expression possesses as a unique and distinctive facet of the One Integral Truth.

NATURE.—The Articles, as a general rule, are concentrative and suggestive; their keynote is Synthesis, and therefore their full significance may not be evident from one perusal, but they may afford a basis for further study and application.

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All money received is consecrated to the work of disseminating the Universal Wisdom, and all work in connection with the Quarterly is done voluntarily and impersonally.

The Editors accept responsibility for all articles, but invite assistance and contributions on the understanding that they are both voluntary and impersonal.

THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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THE YIN FU KING*

SECTION II

1. *For Heaven now to produce life and now to destroy it is the mode of the operation of Tao. Heaven and Earth are the despoilers of All Things; All Things are the despoilers of Man; Man is the despoiler of All Things. When the three despoilers act in mutual harmony as the Three Powers, they will rest in tranquillity.*

The processes of increase and decrease in the natural kingdoms are expressions of the rhythmic activities of Heaven and Earth, operating in accordance with the fundamental governing principle of Tao.

Heaven and Earth, as the causes of these dual natural processes wherein what is produced at one time is destroyed at another, are the despoilers of all things. Yet behind the change itself must be the pattern and the law of that change.

All things in the manifested universe are the despoilers of man, because they constantly appropriate for their own use whatever they are able to take from him. In a natural sense they may take from man his body; and in so far as they are the material cause of attachment to the realms of transiency they may be considered as despoilers in a higher sense.

Man, as the most dignified of all created things, is the despoiler of all things, using them for his own purposes, both ordinately and inordinately.

When, however, man observes the Law of Tao, and the three despoilers or powers thus work in perfect mutual accord, the Three Powers rest in tranquillity.

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 89 and 90.

2. *Wherefore it is said: "During the time of unfoldment all the elements are adequately regulated; when the full energy of maturity is in motion all transformations serenely ensue."*

This implies that the plenitude of maturity is essentially contained even in the very beginnings of every manifested thing; and that there is an ordered progression through every stage of unfoldment.

Even the analogical despoiling of all things by Heaven and Earth is an exemplification of this law.

When the three despoilers operate according to the Law of Tao, the evolution of the cosmos proceeds serenely and all natural processes move towards their consummation.

3. *Days and months have their determinate times; greatness and smallness, their precise extent. The worth of the Sage thus becomes apparent, and spiritual intelligence is revealed.*

The merits of Sages and their spiritual intelligence become apparent through their capacity to perceive and act in conformity with the ideal cosmic periods and the true measure of things.

4. *The motive power of the three despoilers is invisible and unrecognized by the generality of men. When the superior man receives it he is enabled to invigorate his body; but when the inferior man receives it he makes light of his life.*

The power which moves all things in the universe is only apparent through its operations.

The superior man uses his knowledge of this hidden power as a source of strength, realizing that his earthly body should be the servant of his heavenly nature.

When the inferior man knows that there is a hidden power upon which he can draw he uses it carelessly, not appreciating its value, and thus makes little real use of his life, pursuing things of earth instead of those of Heaven.

(To be concluded)

THE QUIETISTS

II. MADAME GUYON

Madame Guyon is one of the few well-known mystics who fulfilled her purpose of union with the Divine not in solitude, nor in a religious community, but for the most part in the ordinary conditions of domestic life.

Jeanne Marie de la Mothe was born on April 13th, 1648, "of parents who," as she writes, "made profession of very great piety, particularly my father; for from a very long time almost as many saints could be counted in his family as there were persons who composed it." At birth she nearly died, and all through her life she suffered much from illness. Her mother left Jeanne to the care of servants who, she says, "could only teach me evil and render it familiar to me," and devoted herself to her son. These two factors were the cause of much unhappiness in Madame Guyon's childhood and in her *Life* she speaks very plainly about the duties of parents towards their children.

One day, when she was nearly seven, her father found her playing in the streets and at once took her to the Convent of the Ursulines where her two half-sisters were nuns. Here she remained for two years, until jealousy on the part of one sister led to her return home. Then for eight months she lived at a Dominican convent, but was sent home on account of illness. At ten years of age she was a beautiful and attractive child and her mother began to make much of her, but still her brother was the favourite and this led to injustice and aroused resentment on her part. Her mother began to bring her into society, but though her lively and engaging ways and happy disposition brought her many friends, she still inclined to the life of the convent. She loved to give to the poor, and sometimes in her mother's absence would give away the household linen or would invite beggars to share her own meals and delight in serving them with her own hands.

At twelve years of age she was deeply influenced by the visit of a cousin, a very saintly man who was returning to missionary

work, and after this time she began to read the works of St. Francis de Sales and the life of Madame de Chantal.

This devotional phase was followed by a period in which, she says, she found much pleasure in her own beauty and began to discover faults in all the rest of her sex. At this time her family moved to Paris, and at the age of fifteen, after having been sought in marriage by many people, she was betrothed to the wealthy M. Guyon, a man twenty-two years older than herself. She signed the articles of marriage without knowing what they were, and when told, was pleased at the thought of the liberty she imagined she would have. But in fact the greater part of her married life was unhappy owing to the continual unkindness of her husband's mother in whose house they lived.

In her father's house she had been encouraged to express her opinions. In her new home she was continually blamed, contradicted and silenced until her gaiety and wit left her and she seemed so dull as to be almost unrecognizable to her friends. Her husband loved her, but his hasty temper and the frequent complaints made to him about his wife kept him in a perpetual state of annoyance. In her unhappiness Madame Guyon began again to pray and to turn inward for help in the conquest of her own passionate temper.

Soon after the birth of her first son her husband lost the greater part of his income and not long afterwards Madame Guyon was seriously ill and nearly died. The long illness, she said, "was very useful to me, for besides a very great patience in the midst of severe pain, it threw a great light for me on the worthlessness of the things of the world. It detached me much from myself."

At the age of eighteen she made the acquaintance of an exceptionally spiritually-minded woman, "who showed in her face a very great presence of God, and who was accustomed to simplicity in prayer." This she tried to explain to Madame Guyon who, however, was not as yet able to understand it. She met her missionary cousin again at her father's house and his talks with her marked a turning point in her life. His life was one of continual prayer and he tried to help her also to reach this state. She prayed and meditated, but all to no purpose, and her confessor, to whom she spoke on the subject, did not

understand her need. At last, at her father's desire, she consulted a friend of his, a Franciscan monk, telling him of her longing to serve God more perfectly, and of her difficulty in prayer. He answered her, "It is because you seek outside what you have within." These words, she said, "were like an arrow that pierced my heart. They made me discover what was there. You asked from me only a simple turning inward to make me feel Your Presence, O Infinite Goodness. You were so near, and I went running here and there to look for You and I did not find You."

Prayer was easy to her now. It was a prayer far above ecstasies and visions, a prayer of "enjoyment and possession in the will" without forms or images; a prayer of faith in which the powers of the soul were united in deep concentration, without act or speech, and without the distinction of any Divine attributes. The state of her soul was "very pure, very firm, very solid," and she longed to suffer for God. At this time she began to use severe physical penances: she would wear a girdle of iron points or of brambles, and she often secretly scourged herself, although in later life she discouraged the use of self-imposed physical penances. In this manner she disciplined her senses until by the time she was twenty years old she could do without the least distaste things which had formerly been most unpleasant to her.

Her new life of prayer gave great offence to her husband and his mother who now gave her no opportunities for solitude. Many of her former friends ridiculed her, but she found a strong support and comforter in a new friend, the Prioress of the Benedictines, Mother Grainger, a wise and saintly woman. At home her only course was to keep silent. When it became known that she tried to attend Communion as often as possible, this was stopped, as were her visits to Mother Grainger. She was, however, allowed to visit the sick and dress the wounds of those who came to the house for help.

With a return of an interior attraction to and union with God, she accused herself of being too much carried away by it—a sign of attachment; but little by little her will became more and more lost in the Will of God until she felt that she could desire nothing but what she had. "I was astonished to find that I could not desire or fear anything. Every place was

my proper place; everywhere I found my centre, because everywhere I found God."

In the summer of 1672 her father and her much loved little daughter died within a month, and four years later her husband, who had been for many years subject to frequent and severe attacks of gout, died, leaving his affairs in great confusion. Her wise settlement of the many difficult points which arose gained her the reputation of great skill in business affairs. She was now twenty-eight years of age and had two sons, and a daughter a few months old. In time it was arranged that she should take a small house in the country where she devoted herself to her children and to the care of the sick and poor. She also began to learn Latin in order to extend her reading.

For three years before her husband's death she had experienced a state of spiritual desolation which continued for another four years. She lost the power to pray, she could not even concentrate sufficiently to endure to remain in church, and a purely natural disposition re-awakened in her with strong desires for many things which, when gained, failed to satisfy her, only arousing disgust at what she called her unfaithfulness.

About three years after her husband's death she had occasion to write to a friend, Father la Combe, with whom she had become acquainted through her half-brother, Father la Mothe, and to whom she had opened the way of interior prayer. She told him of her misery, and he answered that her state was really a state of grace. Some time after this she was told in a vision that there was a work for God waiting for her at Geneva, but she had no notion as to what kind of work it might be. In 1680 she wrote again to Father la Combe, begging him to say a Mass for her on the day of St. Mary Magdalene. On that day her time of desolation ended, and she was brought into a new and wonderful condition of life and liberty. "What I possessed," she says, "was so simple and immense that I cannot express it. The peace I possessed before this time was indeed the peace of God, but it was not God-peace: peace which He possesses in Himself and which is found only in Him. Although as yet only in its rising dawn, every faculty for good was restored to me more fully than before; but in a manner so free, so spontaneous, that it seemed to have become natural to me." She speaks of "finding everywhere a

great immensity and vastness. I could not move myself or bring myself into action from the principle of self, because self was gone."

In 1681, after placing her sons in the care of suitable people, she left Paris secretly with her little daughter, because of great opposition from her relatives to her plan for work in Geneva. She decided to leave her daughter with the Ursulines at Tonon and to live at the house of the New Catholics at Gex, a stronghold of Protestantism, near Geneva. At Gex she had to suffer in many ways. A priest, of whom she wrote as being unworthy of his office, stirred up persecution against her; her letters were intercepted and statements taken from them were distorted and made to appear libellous and heretical; the Bishop was influenced against her through the stories that were spread about, yet in spite of this, an attempt was made to force her to become Superior of the convent in order, as she said, that her money might be secured to them.

She had made over most of her property to her children, keeping only enough for a small annuity which she spent on the community; even her servants were lent for the work of the house.

Father la Mothe joined from Paris in the attack, turning to her disadvantage passages in her letters to him. He, also, she said, being disappointed in the hope of receiving money from her, was one of her chief persecutors, and the cause of her final imprisonment.

In the midst of her troubles at Gex she was called to the convent at Tonon where her daughter was seriously ill. There it was made known to her that she had a work to do in relation to Father la Combe—that of leading him, as a mother with a child, out of his present way of illumination, into the "way of simple faith and destruction of the self." He, recognizing his need, ordered her, as her director, to write for him an explanation of the nature of the way of faith and of the way of illumination.

This was a time of great stress and trial for Madame Guyon. Her child recovered, but other difficulties arose. At times her senses were in agony, but in the central depth of her soul she was at peace. During a retreat she had an impulse to write, but without any choice of a subject. When she began, the words

flowed with a strange impetuosity from the soul. This treatise was afterwards named *Spiritual Torrents*.

The nuns at Tonon became devoted to her, and many people were drawn to her teachings, but after two and a half years she had to leave the convent, on account of her health, and take a small cottage some distance away. Here she was persecuted by the local Protestants, who broke the windows with stones and threatened to force their way into the house. She next went to visit a friend at Turin, and a short time later she was recalled to Paris. On her way she stayed at Grenoble where she realized that there was a work for her to do. Many people sought her out, and it was here that she felt herself "suddenly clothed with an Apostolic state, namely the discernment of spirits and the giving to each what was suitable for them." The work grew and, as she wrote, "reached such a point that ordinarily from six in the morning until eight in the evening I was occupied in speaking of God. From far and near came monks, priests, men of the world, girls, women; and God gave me wherewith to satisfy all in an admirable manner without my taking any thought or paying any attention to it. Nothing in their interior state was concealed from me. The more spiritual of those souls found that, when near me, there was communicated to them without speech a grace which they could not comprehend, nor cease to wonder at. The others found an unction in my words so that they operated in them what I said to them." Some came as spies from her enemies, unknown to her, but for these no words were given to her, so they thought her silence stupidity. One community of monks was converted to her mode of prayer. "I could not write the number of souls given to me."

At Grenoble she had an impulse to read the Scriptures and she wrote, without premeditation, explanations of the passages read. She worked quickly, and for hours at a time, often at night, for she slept little.

One day a councillor of Grenoble, "a great servant of God," found on her table a manuscript, *A Method of Prayer*, which had been written long before. He read it and lent it to friends who asked for copies. He decided to print it and asked Madame Guyon to write a preface. The book was widely read and aroused great approval as well as great antagonism. Suddenly

an attack broke out against her and she was advised to leave Grenoble. She stayed for some time at Marseilles, then at Vercell. In each place she met with opposition which finally turned to wholehearted admiration. Finally she reached Paris. Here both she and Father la Combe were to endure their greatest trials at the instigation of her half-brother Father la Mothe who, she wrote, "directed all the tragedy, dissimulated as much as he could, and in his usual manner, giving secret blows and making semblance of flattering whilst dealing the most dangerous strokes."

Father la Combe, she said, was attacked because he refused to order her to obey the wishes of Father la Mothe, and also because of jealousy. Many scandalous tales were circulated about him, but the influence of his preaching and direction of souls was so great that these attacks were ineffectual at the time. Next, some of the condemned propositions of Molinos were collected and circulated as the errors of Father la Combe. Such was his simplicity that he fell an easy victim to the plots made against him, but he could not be accused before the Archbishop or the General of his Order, because his enemies knew that the charges made against him would not bear full investigation. It was therefore arranged that he should unknowingly disobey the king's commands. Acting on forged evidence, the king sent an official to examine him. Nothing was said to Father la Combe about such an examination, but he was sent away on some errand whenever the official was expected, and then was accused of disobeying the king. He was also persuaded to give into the keeping of Father la Mothe a certificate of approval of his doctrine issued by the Inquisition. This, he was told, would be used in his defence, but later Father la Mothe denied that the document had ever been given to him. Finally, at the king's order, Father la Combe was imprisoned in the Bastille, where at last in solitary confinement he lost his reason and died.

Father la Mothe now turned his attention to his other victim. Madame Guyon was accused of various crimes and also of holding forbidden assemblies for the teaching of Quietist doctrines. She was warned by her half-brother to leave Paris, but guessing that this was suggested in order to make her seem guilty, she stayed. Each day brought new attacks and in time her enemies, realizing that in her case, also, an ecclesiastical

court would prove her innocence, again made use of the king, giving him a forged letter which stated that she was a heretic and was in correspondence with Molinos, a man of whom she had hardly heard and whose writings she had not read. They also showed him a letter written, apparently, by herself, saying that she was too closely watched to hold assemblies in her own house, but that she would hold them in the houses of certain people named. The names were those of people of whom she had never heard.

The king ordered her imprisonment. She was ill at the time, but when she could be moved she was imprisoned in one room at the Convent of the Visitation in Paris. Meanwhile, acting on a forged declaration accusing many people by name, her enemies brought about the exile of a large number of her friends and sympathizers.

The nuns at the convent at first regarded her with horror, but in the end they became devoted to her. In an attempt to incriminate her she was questioned four times on her books and on certain forged letters. One such letter was "a frightful one, written against the king and the state." Finally, Madame de Maintenon, who had been approached by two friends of Madame Guyon, used her influence with the king, secured the release of Madame Guyon, and received her at the institution for young girls at St. Cyr in which she was so keenly interested. A few days after her release Madame Guyon met, for the first time, the famous Abbé de Fénelon, a man of great learning and with a wonderful simplicity and beauty of character. "Our Lord," wrote Madame Guyon, "made me understand the great designs he has for this person and how dear he is to Him." Their friendship increased and Fénelon soon realized the value of her teachings and the deep spirituality of her nature. Later he was to uphold her doctrines in the famous controversy with Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux.

For four years Madame Guyon visited St. Cyr and taught the girls, but gradually her influence grew and, in her own words, "the confidence shown in me by some young ladies of the Court, distinguished for their rank and their piety, began to cause uneasiness in the persons who had persecuted me." This led to an accusation on their part that she was giving private directions at St. Cyr and disturbing the order of the house.

She was accordingly asked by Madame de Maintenon to give up her visits and correspondence with the girls. Her enemies spread a report that she had been dismissed for teaching Quietism, and, among other schemes aimed at her downfall, a woman was hired to go from one confessor to another accusing herself of many crimes committed under the influence of Quietism. After this time Madame de Maintenon was less favourably disposed towards her, and gradually became influenced against her.

The attack finally centred on her teachings and some of her friends advised her to consult the Bishop of Meaux, Mgr. Bossuet—a course which led at last to her long imprisonment. Bossuet was a man of vast learning, and his great reputation had made him the leader of the Church in France. He was not, however, a man of the interior life, and he failed to grasp the spiritual meaning of the teachings he criticized. From an admirer, he became one of the most relentless of persecutors. To him Madame Guyon gave her writings, including her autobiography, asking for this the secrecy of the confessional. He agreed, but later published parts of it in his attacks upon her. As the campaign showed signs of increasing, she wrote to Madame de Maintenon asking that an investigation might be made into the charges of heresy brought against her. After some time she was allowed to suggest the names of three men to form a commission for the examination of her writings. She chose Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the Bishop of Chalons, who was mild and pious, and M. Tronson, a man of high integrity and good judgment, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. They decided not to meet in Paris lest the Archbishop of Paris should hear of the project, for none of the four had confidence in his judgment.

Some time after the examination had begun, a number of false accusations against Madame Guyon were sent to the Archbishop. These he disbelieved, and through one of his relatives he sent word to her that if she would go to see him, he would free her from all her troubles. She did not go, but in her *Life* she writes, "He wished to have the glory of it and that no one else should meddle. He would have fully justified me, according to what I have since learned on good authority. I owe this justice to the fidelity of my God, that He did not

fail me on this occasion and that He put it into my heart to go to him. I even believed myself obliged to obey the voice of my Shepherd; but my friends, who feared the Archbishop might discover my secret regarding the Bishop of Meaux, ignoring that he had not kept it himself, did not allow me to go, nor to follow the inclination I had. I did not go then, acting on this occasion against my own heart, and seeing in general all the misfortunes this refusal entailed. The Archbishop of Paris, indignant with reason at my refusal to go and see him, censured my books, which up to then he had not done, having been satisfied with the explanations I had given him six or seven years before. After this censure there were no bounds to the calumny."

As the examination went on, it became clear that the only thought of Bossuet was to condemn; but the Bishop of Chalons and M. Tronson were satisfied of the truth of her books, and in 1557 at Issy they made a written statement of their views on thirty-four points discussed, to which Madame Guyon assented with the reservation that the statement did not express the whole truth.

In order then to convince Bossuet of her good faith and to enable him to form a judgment of her character, Madame Guyon offered to spend some time in a convent in his diocese. Here Bossuet visited her and did all in his power to make her sign statements denying various articles of the faith and acknowledging that she held certain errors which he had condemned. Sometimes he seemed favourable to her; at other times he would speak violently, ordering her to declare herself a heretic, and threatening to cut her off from the benefits of the Church. After six months, however, he gave her a certificate stating that he was satisfied with her, and he agreed to her return to Paris.

By this action he incurred the displeasure of Madame de Maintenon and, fearing loss of preferment, he hastened back to Meaux to find that Madame Guyon had already left, taking with her the certificate which she placed in the hands of a trustworthy member of her family.

Furious at finding her gone, he gave out that against his wishes she had fled, making her escape by climbing the convent wall. After a few months she was arrested and imprisoned at

Vincennes. In 1698 she was sent to the Bastille where she shared a cell with a devoted maid-servant. The hardships of the next four years seriously affected her health, and after her release in 1702 she wrote, "No sooner had I left prison and my mind began to breathe again after so many trials, than the body was overwhelmed with all sorts of infirmities and I have had almost continual illness which brought me to death's door." Of her soul's state, however, she said, "In these latter times I am able to say little or nothing of my dispositions, because my state has become simple and invariable. . . . All is lost in the immensity . . . it is like a little drop of water sunk in the sea. In that Divine Immensity the soul no longer sees herself, but in God she discovers the objects without discerning them save by the taste of the heart. All is darkness and obscurity as regards her; all is light on the part of God Who does not allow her to be ignorant of anything; while she knows not what she knows nor how she knows it. There is no interest for herself, no recollection of or occupation with herself."

The rest of her life was spent in seclusion, and she died on June 9, 1717. Just as she attracted and influenced many followers by the beauty of her living example, so the teachings given in her writings, more especially in the *Method of Prayer* and her *Life*, have continued to the present day her spiritual work of feeding and guiding those souls who have been willing and able to receive and benefit by the fruits of her life of prayer.

SEED THOUGHT

Consider, friend, I pray you, if that mind which is in your body does order and dispose it every way as it pleases, why should not that Wisdom which is in the Universe be able to order all things therein also, as seemeth best to it? And if your eye can discern things several miles distant from it, why should it be thought impossible for the Eye of God to behold all things at once? Lastly, if your soul can mind things both here and in Egypt, and in Sicily, why may not the Great Mind or Wisdom of God be able to take care of all things in all places?

Socrates.

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

Proposition CXLI

Every Providence of the Gods is twofold, one indeed being exempt from the natures for which it provides, but the other co-arranged with them

For some Divine essences, indeed, according to hyparxis, and the peculiarity of Their order, are entirely expanded above the illuminated natures. But others, being of the same order, provide for things subordinate that are of the same co-ordination; these also imitating the providential energy of the exempt Gods, and desiring to fill secondary natures with the good which they are able to impart.

Proposition CXLII

The Gods are present with all things after the same manner, but all things are not after the same manner present with the Gods. But everything participates of Their Presence according to its own order and power. And this is accomplished by some things uniformly, but by others manifoldly; by some things eternally, but by others according to time; and by some things incorporeally, but by others corporeally

For it is necessary that the different participation of the same things should become different, either from the participant, or from that which is participated. But every thing Divine always possesses the same Order, and is without habitude to, and unmingled with all other things. It follows, therefore, that the mutation must subsist from the participants, and that in these that which is not invariably the same must be found, and that at different times they are differently present with the Gods. Hence, though the Gods are present with all things with invariable sameness, all things are not after the same manner

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 90.

present with Them. But other things are present with Them as far as they are able, and according to the manner in which they are present, enjoy Their illuminations. For the participation is according to the measure of the Presence of the Divinities.

Proposition CXLIII

All inferior natures fail before the Presence of the Gods though that which participates of Them may be adapted to participation. Every thing foreign indeed from Divine Light becomes far removed from It. But all things are illuminated at once by the Gods

For Divine Natures are always more comprehensive and more powerful than the things which proceed from Them. But the inaptitude of the participants becomes the cause of the privation of Divine illumination; for this inaptitude obscures the light by its own imbecility. And this being obscured, something else appears to receive dominion, not according to its own power, but according to the imbecility of the participant, which seems to rise against the Divine form of illumination.

Proposition CXLIV

All beings, and all the distributions of beings, extend as far in their progressions as the Orders of the Gods

For the Gods produce beings in conjunction with Themselves, nor is any thing able to subsist, and to receive measure and order external to the Gods (or beyond Their influence); for all things are perfected through Their Power, and are arranged and measured by the Gods. Prior therefore to the last genera in beings, the Gods pre-exist, Who also adorn these genera and impart to them life, formation, and perfection, and convert them to *The Good*. In a similar manner, also, the Gods are prior to the middle and first genera of beings. And all things are bound and rooted in the Gods, and through this cause are preserved. But when any thing apostatizes from, and becomes destitute of the Gods, it entirely departs into non-entity and vanishes in consequence of being perfectly deprived of those Natures by which it was contained.

Proposition CXLV

The peculiarity of every Divine Order pervades through all secondary natures, and imparts itself to all the subordinate genera of beings

For if beings proceed as far as the Orders of the Gods extend, in every genus of being there is a supernally illuminated peculiarity of the Divine Powers. For every thing receives from its proximate appropriate cause the peculiarity according to which that cause is allotted its subsistence. I say, for instance, if there is a certain cathartic or purifying Deity, there is also a purification in souls, in animals, in plants, and in stones. And in a similar manner, if there is a guardian, a convertive, a perfective, and a vivific power. And a stone, indeed, participates of the Divine cathartic power in a corporeal manner only; but a plant participates it more clearly according to life. An animal possesses this form according to impulse; the rational soul rationally; intellect intellectually; and the Gods superessentially and unically. The whole series also has the same power from one Divine Cause. And there is the same mode of reasoning with respect to the peculiarities of the other Divine Powers. For all things are suspended from the Gods. And different natures are illuminated by different Gods; every Divine series extending to the last of things. And some things, indeed, are suspended from the Gods immediately, but others through a greater or less number of media. *But all things are full of the Gods*, and whatever any thing naturally possesses, it derives from the Gods.

Proposition CXLVI

The ends of all the Divine progressions are assimilated to their Principles, preserving a circle without a beginning and without an end, through conversion to their Principles

For if every thing that has proceeded is converted to the proper principle from which it proceeded, much more will total Orders, having proceeded from Their Summit, be converted to It. But the conversion of the end to the beginning renders the whole order one, definite, and converging to itself, and exhibiting, through the convergency, that which has the form of *The One* in the multitude.

(To be continued)

EXTRACTS FROM ECKHART

He who makes over his will to God, to him God gives His Will in return, so wholly, so really, that God's Will becomes man's own.

While in all thy doings thou art more towards thyself, or towards one person rather than another, thy will has not become God's Will.

If our will is God's Will, well and good, but if God's Will is ours that is better.

Night and day we cry to God "Lord, Thy Will be done." And when God's Will does come to pass we grumble that it is all wrong.

It is true joy when the soul assembled in her inmost self becomes aware of a power, of a place in her from which God is never missing, wherein the heavenly Father is begetting His Son without ceasing. When the soul is aware of and alive to this then from this place divine joy flows into the soul.

Now the question is; can any of the soul powers go on working while the Father is speaking His Eternal Word supernally into the soul? You must know that the soul has two sets of powers, inner and outer. These must all be stilled and the powers which move the body as well. All these powers must be fetched in; not one of them is able to remain at work, the soul being the motionless form of the body. As the prophet says, "While creatures were all asleep God spoke His silent word into my soul."

It was said by a philosopher that whoso knows of God that He is unknown, that man knows God; for it is the light of gnosis and perception to know and understand in agnosia and a-perception . . . what we say that God is, He is not; what we say He is not, that He is rather than what we say that He is. . . . God's worth and God's perfection cannot be put into words.

Remember, as thou seekest aught of thine thou shalt never find God, for thou art not seeking God alone.

To people who resign themselves to God and diligently seek to do His Will, to these, I say, whatever God may send will be the best . . . whatever thou hast or hast not, accept it all to the glory of God.

The more man flees from creatures the faster hastens to Him their Creator.

When creature goes back to her first cause she knows God simply as one in form and essence and threefold in operation. What intellect knows is knowledge, and knowledge stops at what is known, with what is known becoming one. Into the simple Idea no knowledge ever enters, for this impartible exemplar after which God created all creatures towers God-high above creatures.

The power of things resides in essence. Now the soul is capable of knowing all things in her highest power, she being all clothed in her secret chamber. To the soul thus freed from things there is disclosed His secret essence. She is able to receive His arcane power.

Observe when a man is all creatures; when he has the power of them all. When a man, knowing with his outward senses all corporeal things, detaches himself from them and abides therein without attachment; then at length that man is all creatures; then, not till then, that man has come to his own nature and is ready to go into God.

Peradventure thou wilt say: "Well sir, since you are always assuming that some day this birth will happen in me, can I have any sign whereby to recognize that it has taken place?"

Yes, surely! There would be three signs. I will tell you one of them. I am often asked whether it is possible to reach the point of not being hindered by anything in time, either by multiplicity or matter. Indeed it is! If this birth really happens no creature will hinder thee, all point thee to God and this

birth . . . nay, even what was formerly a hindrance is now nothing but a help . . . All things are simply God to thee who seest only God in all things. Like one who long looks at the sun, he encounters the sun in whatever he afterwards looks at. If this is lacking, this looking for and seeing God in all and sundry, then thou lackest this birth.

If thou wilt find this noble birth, verily thou must quit the multitude and return to the starting-point, into the ground out of which thou art come. The powers of the soul and their words, these are the multitude: memory, understanding and will, these all diversify thee, therefore thou must leave them all: sensible perception, imagination and everything wherein thou findest thyself and hast thyself in view. Thereafter thou mayest find this birth, but believe me, not otherwise.

We must school ourselves in riddance to the point of having no personal belongings. We may realize it or not, but attacks of restlessness are due solely to the personal will. We ought then to commit ourselves and all our thoughts, will- and desire-free, to the goodwill of God therewith unreservedly to desire and will.

In proof that it (virtue) is ours we shall find ourselves bent chiefly upon virtue and doing virtuous deeds spontaneously with no idea of their being fine or important things—they are done as a matter of course and for love rather than for any why.

SEED THOUGHT

Time is but an image of that Unmade 'Duration,' which we call Eternity; wherefore as this sensible world was made according to that Eternal Exemplar or Pattern of the Intelligible World, so was Time made together with the world, as an imitation of Eternity.

Timæus Locrus.

VENERABLE ONES

Those masters of the moral world, who have preserved an undisputed lordship over good minds for ages after they themselves have died, have not gained that rare fortune by any extraordinary manners of life, or any unseemly defiance of the elements, or of death. Temperate, unassuming men, they have conformed to the fashions of the times in which they fell, without effort or contempt. God, in their minds, removed the ancient landmarks of thought, or else gave them the strength to overleap the boundary, so that they took in a mightier vision of the state of man than their fellows had done. In all this they did not see *differently* from them, but *saw beyond* the common limit. Accordingly it was no part of their pride to be at discord with men upon common matters of every day's observation. Upon trifles of time and sense they all thought alike. Deeper thoughts and remote consequences, far beyond the ken of vulgar judgments, and yet intimately connected with the progress and destinies of society, were the points they fixed their eyes upon; and upon the distinctness with which they were able to detect these, they chiefly valued themselves. It is a delightful relief in the afflicting history of the world; it is a crystal fountain gushing in the wilderness—to remember the men who exercised this peaceful and sublime dominion over human hearts not cemented by blood nor shaken by the curses of enemies. Bound like other men to the complicated machine of society, and their fortunes inseparably linked to the greatness of another house—these minds quietly founded a kingdom of their own, which should long outlast the ruins of that transient dynasty in which it grew. Men of God they were, children of a clearer day, walking upon earth, keeping in their hands the urns of immortality out of which there streamed a light which reached to far distant generations that might follow in their track.

Emerson.

EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMENTARY OF SIMPLICIUS UPON THE ENCHIRIDION OF EPICTETUS*

"Just as a mark is not set up to be missed, so there is no nature of evil in the world."†

No man ever proposed evil as the end of any action; . . . the mason proposes for his end the house he is building, and the carpenter the door he is making; but neither the one nor the other ever works only that he may work ill. . . .

Evil is the missing of the mark, for that to which Nature hath given a real and designed existence is the mark, and the compassing of that is the hitting of the mark. Now if what Nature really made and designed be not the missing of the mark but the hitting of it, and if evil be the missing of the mark, then it is plain that evil can be none of those things which have a real and designed existence. . . .

Now when the author says there is no nature of evil in the world, it is to be understood that Nature never formed or designed any such thing, . . . For if there were such a thing, then it would be proposed as the end or product of action. . . . So that it would follow that there is a mark set up only that it may not be hit, which is contrary to common sense and the practice of all mankind. Therefore there can be no such thing in Nature as evil, because evil is not capable of being the end of any action in Nature.

"It may be said, generally speaking, that the quality of the persons we converse with, and the mutual relations they bear, is the true standard of a man's duty and behaviour towards them. . . ."

The duty of man is properly that which it becomes him to do upon every occasion, and the rendering to every one of what is fitting. This is more peculiarly called the work of Justice, taken in a sense so comprehensive as to include all

* For previous sections see the *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 87, 89 and 90.

† The whole of the valuable Commentary of Simplicius on this passage is given in the *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 63, pp. 57-69.

manner of virtue. For the word is sometimes restrained to one particular virtue distinguished from the rest, and sometimes enlarged and extended to them all. Now it is the business of Justice to give every one his due. . . .

It is the peculiar excellence of those things that tend to the soul's good, that the possessor hath them entirely to himself, even when he imparts them to others. They are not diminished, but augmented, by communication, for they are excited and kindled in the breasts of those on whom we bestow them; and the farther they spread and the more they are scattered, the more and larger do they grow. So that the Light of Truth and Virtue takes fire by its expression, as a match does by the mutual attrition of flint and steel, that kindles by the sparks that come from it, but itself loses none of the virtue it gives away.

Again, when friends make true good their end and right reason their rule, they are sure never to differ in point of interest, for they judge of advantage by the same common standard. . . .

Every man is capable of lending a helping hand, though not every man in the same way.

"Take notice that the principal and most important duty in religion is to possess our minds with just and becoming ideas of the Gods; to believe that there are such Supreme Beings, and that They govern and dispose of all the affairs of the world with a just and good Providence. And in agreement to such a persuasion, to dispose ourselves to a ready and reverent obedience, and a perfect acquiescence in all Their dispensations." . . .

The duties expected from us to . . . Those of a Nature more excellent than our own . . . are discovered by our taking a just view of the relation between the Gods and ourselves: and that is such a one as effects bear to their Highest and First Causes.

If, then, They are to be considered in this manner, it is evident that They stand not in any need of our services; nor can we add to Their happiness or perfection. Our duties, consequently, and the intent of them, are only such as may express our subjection, and procure for us a more free access and intercourse with Them: for this is the only method of realizing our relation to our First and Highest Causes.

The instances of this submission due from us are honour,

and reverence, and adoration; a voluntary submission to all Their dispensations, and a perfect acquiescence in all events ordered by Them, as being fully satisfied that they are the appointments of Absolute Wisdom and Infinite Goodness.

These are qualifications to which we must attain by rectifying the ideas of our minds and reforming the errors of our lives. The ideas of our minds must be rectified by entertaining no thoughts of the Gods save those which are worthy of Them and becoming to us: such as—that They are the First Causes of all things; that They dispose of all events and concern Themselves in the government of the world; and that all Their government and all their disposals are wise and just and good.*

Having thus laid the foundations of religion in true ideas of the Divine Nature, in a contented submission to all events, and in a firm persuasion of a wise and good Providence. . . . Epictetus now proceeds to inform us what methods we should take to express our reverence and honour for the Gods. . . .

As therefore we hold ourselves bound in the first place to set apart that soul which we received from God to His service, and to consecrate it by refined and holy thoughts, by worthy and reverent ideas of His Majesty, and by a regular uncorrupt life; so it should be our next care to purify and dedicate this body, too, which came to us from the same Hand, and carefully to wash away all the seen or hidden blemishes and pollutions which it may have contracted. When the soul and its instrument are thus clear from all their stains, let us come decently clothed into His Presence, and there devote a part of what God in His bounty hath conferred upon us, to His use and service. For it is highly reasonable and just that a part should be given back to Him from Whom we receive the whole: not that He needs or is the better for it (nor is He so indeed, either, for the holiness of our lives, or the reverent and worthy ideas we have of Him; so that this objection might be brought equally against all piety in general); but it is for our own advantage, for when we have thus qualified ourselves for His benign influences, He communicates Himself to us in those proportions of which we are capable and worthy. . . .

* The demonstrations of these three points, as given by Simplicius, are reprinted in the *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 60, pp. 331-338.

Now all the religious performances, by which we would express our honour for God, ought, says Epictetus, to be attended with holiness and sincerity, and not done in a slovenly and sordid manner. For it is by no means fit that any impure thing should presume to be admitted to make its approach to the purest and most perfect Being. And any mixture which adulterates that which is pure and sincere does at the same time pollute and stain it. . . . The neglects and wanderings of a loose worship check the Divine influences, and render all our devotion flat and feeble: as, on the contrary, a wise and steady zeal is the best recommendation of our prayers, and gives them such energy and force that never returns empty.

(To be continued)

JEWELS

All true happiness consists in a participation of God, arising out of the assimilation and conformity of our souls to Him; and the most real misery ariseth out of the apostasy of souls from God.

John Smith.

All the scattered rays of beauty and loveliness which we behold spread up and down over all the world, are only the emanations of that inexhausted Light which is above; wherefore should we love them all in that, and climb up always by those sun beams unto the eternal Father of Lights—and always eyeing Him should polish and shape our souls into the clearest resemblance of Him.

Ibid.

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